4: Benhazera--17 G-5 (1905), 1908 MS25 Tuareg MS25
Hoggar

Chapter X

Games

Children play a game with a ball, "tekerikera", ⵜⴽⵔⴽⵔ, which they hit with curved sticks /20/ ("iggaten tekerikera," they hit the ball). Two camps are formed and the ball must be made to go into the opposing camp. 526 857

But their greatest amusement is to make out of clay little sticks and stones, all kinds of animals and people, which they call "isounar" ⵉⵙⵙⵏ. Thus they make a mehari with its saddle, a camel with its young, a horse, etc., or they may make a mehari with a man on it, "aknar" ⴰⴽⵏⴰⵔ, or a woman in her bassour, "taknart" ⵜⴰⴽⵏⴰⵔⵜ; here are a bride and groom. These young sculptors, it seems, are very skillful. 524 532 857

Sometimes they hang a swing, "taoulioula" ⵜⴰⵡⵍⵉⵡⵍⵜ, on a tree. 524 857

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Armed Conflict between Azioue1 and Tacha
(Taïtoq Tuareg) (First Stage)

4: Benhazera--17a G-5 (1905) 1908 MS25 Tuareg MS25
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(Second Stage)

(Third Stage)

4: Benhazera--17b G-5(1905) 1908 MS25 Tuareg MS25
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(Fourth Stage)

4: Benhazera--18 G-5 (1905) 1908 MS25 Tuareg MS25
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(Fifth Stage)

As to the men, they practice throwing the spear as far as possible toward a certain object. They have mock battles with the "takouba" (saber) and shield, "ar'er"; or /22/ they roll up rags and try to cut them with a single stroke of their great "takouba."

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857 /138 cont./ When, by chance, the camp is near a guelta, the child may frolic in the water, the favorite summer sport.

857 If two large camps are near each other, joint games very soon are organized. Sometimes a kind of hockey is played
526 with a leather ball stuffed with goat's hair. The ball is hit with a cudgel taken from a tahla; sometimes, to the delight of the spectators, hand-to-hand fights break out, with the first of the two antagonists to fall to the ground being declared the loser. As the children get excited, veritable battles take place between the two camps; it is war. Sticks and stones enter the game; trickery and force are used. The battle stops at night or when the first child is hurt, but custom requires that nothing be said to the parents, above all nothing of the origin of an injury; the child who did that would lose his honor, and parents are so slow to understand!

857 The little girl prepares for her task as mistress of the house
868 at the side of her mother. She sews in collaboration with the women, who never work individually. She is taught how to cut fine leather thongs and how to plait them; while she works she is taught the traditions of which she must be the fierce guardian later on, as she often will have to recall them to the men, who, always on the move, have a tendency, through lack of use, to forget the true Tuareg "canouns."

868 During their play, the children learn tifinagh writing from the older ones; they trace words in the sand, then phrases. But it is in the evening before bed that their mother will give more precise lessons in spelling the words they have acquired. Thus, gradually, /139/ the child learns to read and write his language; he will never have great facility in it, but that is due to the difficulty of the method of writing.

868 Every Targui knows the mnemonic aid for remembering
211 the letters of the tifinagh alphabet; it is the following phrase: "Fatimata oult Oghanis, tagueltenit mraou issen edssedis; tedjehenet ouart thouadis," which may be translated: "Fatimata, daughter of Oghanis, whose bride price (to be paid) is 16

836 /141 cont./ as are the other customs; there is one very
864 interesting one, the respect for the Tuareg girl. Contrary to a commonly held opinion, the young girl about to be married is always a virgin (physically) among the nobles and nearly always one among the imrads.

839 In their first youth, the Tuareg behave as do all the children of the world; they practice solitary masturbation, girls and boys using procedures characteristic of the country.

786 The first amorous relations between Tuareg girls and boys take place after celebrations. It is well to describe these celebrations, for accounts of the famous "courts of love" have been much exaggerated.

We have seen that the Tuareg organize a tendi on the
[534] occasion of a family ceremony. The tendi takes its name from the instrument used, the large wooden mortar over which is stretched a skin which has been dampened previously. The women gather around the tendi, and one or two beat out traditional rhythms on the skin, which resonates dully. One of the women chants an endless series of couplets while her companions mark the measure by clapping hands and take up the refrain in chorus. The songs evoke past combats as well as recent events; they vaunt the merits of a camel or those of a person; some are improvised. Widows, divorced women, and young girls take part in the tendi, but married women, with the permission of their husbands, also go. A woman leaves the tendi if one of her parents approaches it.

The songs continue, accompanied by the tom-tom; the men then come to sit behind the singers, listen, and also sing. Each hugs his female companion next to him, but hardly passes the limits of a public flirtation. The tendi continues late into the night while the old people sleep in the tents.

• 526 In the daytime the tendi is the indispensable accompaniment of the ilougan, which may be defined as "a tournament on camel back."

526 /141 cont./ The young Tuareg dress very carefully, /142/ each showing great fastidiousness. The camel is decked out as richly as possible. Half of the riders line up about 50 meters from the tendi, and the other half at an equal distance on the other side of the tendi. The Tuareg ride from one line to the other in pairs; each Targui watches his bearing, holding himself straight but supple, makes his mount hold its head as high as possible and keeps it abreast of its neighbor, making it trot with the gait called senat-senat or kibarat.

Quitting this back-and-forth movement, a group of riders circles the tendi as close as possible to the women; one of the Tuareg seizes one of the singers' alechou and rides off furiously, whipping his mount. His friends chase him, trying to take the veil from him. The one who succeeds in recapturing it takes it back, as victor, to its owner. He is saluted with tarallélit (the you-you of the Moors). The ilougan lasts until nightfall.

[177] It must be noted that the tendi did not originate in the Ahaggar; it was imported from the Adrar des Iforas and from Tamesna.

584 A gathering native to the Ahaggar is the assihar. A great number of men and women gather around a famous woman imzad player. They listen to the violin, which begins the first measures of a familiar song, then a man or a woman begins to sing. Between songs conversations are held, and flirtations begin in the darkness, but within the strictest bounds of propriety.

When the assihar ends late at night, young men and women go off in small groups; this is the ahal. A woman escorted by two or three young men goes to sit by a bend in a wadi. Her companions speak to her aloud when the conversation is for all ears or very softly in the ear when there are confidences to make. One of them takes the young woman's hand and holds it in his; an old Targui said: "I once held the hand of the woman I desired for three straight nights, and for three days I did not eat."

7:Nicolaisen E-5 (1951-1962) 1963 MS25 Tuareg MS25

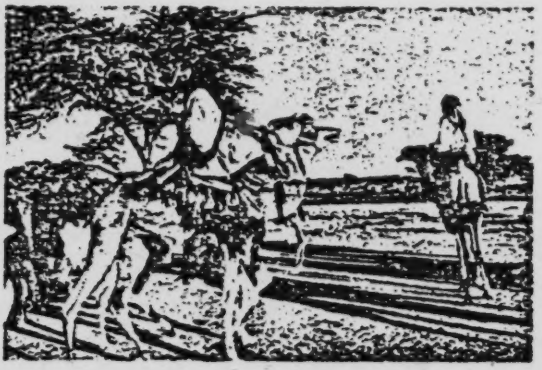

Fig. 82a. Tuareg performing the ceremonial camel-ride on the first wedding day. The women stand in the shade of the *afegag* acacia and sing and drum while the men ride around them two by two. Southern Ayr, *Iyawiken*.

Boys and girls may play together, but there is a tendency for them to separate in their games. Boys' games centre round camels, while the games of girls centre round the family life of the tent and certain domestic tasks. But though camels are never tended by women, girls also make camel figures from cotton stuffed with hay, though they do not make figures to represent goats and donkeys which among vassals are connected with women and tended by them. The emphasis on camels in girl's games is due to the fact that camels have important functions in social life as described briefly below.

Tuareg initiation consists in the adoption of the veil by young men, and a similar piece of cotton used as a head-cloth by young women. The veil is adopted by men when 16–18 years old, the head-cloth by women somewhat earlier shortly after the first menstruation, or at marriage. At initiation the young man is presented with a sword, and if he does not already possess a riding camel with a saddle it will be given him on this occasion by his father, perhaps by his mother's brother. The young man is now a warrior and a camel man, and he will take part in nightly gatherings of young people of both sexes to sing and make music. These nightly gatherings are very often followed by love-making, and the riding camel and the ability of the young man as a rider play a great part for his success in love. The beauty of the riding camel, its saddle gear, and the way it is ridden are all to some extent considered qualities of the rider. Thus when women at nightly gatherings praise young men in their songs they will also praise the riding camels. And when a girl likes a young man she will present him with coloured skin bags, reins, embroidered saddle clothes, and similar objects to be used as ornaments for his riding camel.

In a ceremonial ride termed *ihuton* (*ishuan* in Ayr), which is performed at weddings and certain other feasts, the young men have a particular opportunity to display the beauty of their camels and their own ability as riders. The ride takes place not far from the wedding tent on a level sandy place where the women gather to sing and drum, while the men dressed in their finest clothes ride their ornamented camels to and fro past the women, who praise the beautiful camels and the skilled riders by their songs, their music, and by shrill cheers. In this ceremonial ride the emphasis is not so much on such

7:Nicolaisen E-5 (1951-1962) 1963 MS25 Tuareg MS25

Fig. 82b. Cf. text Fig. 82a.

qualities as strength and speed, but rather on elegance and sublimity. The riders sit straight in the saddles without watching the crowd of women, and the camels are ridden at a gentle trot (generally that known as *senat-senat;* cf. p. 99) with their heads drawn back. In this way the men may also ride their animals round the women in a circle as I have seen in Ayr (cf. Fig. 82).

Camels have important social functions among the Tuareg who take an interest in these animals far beyond their practical value. It may perhaps be useful to compare Tuareg interest in camels with Nuer interest in cattle so brilliantly described by Evans-Pritchard. Nuer caress their animals, and there is a tendency for human beings and cattle to form, so to speak, a single community (Evans-Pritchard 1940, p. 16–50). This is not exactly true of Tuareg and camels. The Tuareg do not pat their camels which will not respond to caressing, and they do not live in very close contact with their animals, most of which frequently graze far away from the camp under the supervision of one or two herdsmen. But the Tuareg nevertheless have much the same feeling towards camels as Nuer have towards their cattle. They are very fond of their animals. They may abstain from camel's flesh because they are fond of camels and would feel very sick at heart when eating them. But though the Tuareg are fond of camels as such, they are delighted particularly at the sight of a very fine camel (*akemhur*; Ahaggar) and may even speak disparagingly of a badly built animal (*amugey*; Ahaggar). Fine camels add to the prestige of a man, while too many animals of poor build may even harm his reputation. When girls and young women praise camel-riders in their songs they praise those mounted on fine and richly-decorated animals. When camels are mentioned in poetry this may also be done as praise to their owners, as in a poem composed in honour of noble Tuareg of the *Uraren* (*Kel Ajjer*) of whom it is said that "their pack-camels have feet as large as a drum, and the loads they carry are like the crests of mountains" (Hanoteau 1896, p. 218). Such reference to pack-camels, however, seems to be rare in Tuareg poetry, while riding camels are frequently mentioned in connection with warfare and love. Riding camels have much the same esteemed position as had horses in Medieval Europe. Tuareg interest in camels is particularly focused on riding camels and there is a tendency towards identification